I first sketched my image onto the paper. I tried to think of what was going to be my focal point. I really liked the flowers and the reflections in the pool. That area would need to be the area where there was the most contrast. To create an area for a center of interest I created a halo around the area I wanted to stand out. Here I used a wet and wet technique. I toughly wetted the paper and then I added a soft dull blue graded wash over the paper leaving the center area white. The wash is a graded wash without any harsh lines. I want it to fade and not be noticed in the finished work.

Rock Garden Landscape
by Kathryn Bourbonniere © 2003

I waited for the paper to dry and then painted the flower heads of the yellow tulips and the purple flowers in the foreground. I also laid in a wash of greens, wet and wet for the background foliage.

I worked in the flowers and continued with the green foliage. Here I was not trying to paint each leaf. I just wanted to suggest the broader areas of colour, keeping my lightest greens toward the focal point. I also laid in some pink flowers and worked on the rocks. I painted the grasses in the front of the pond and then masked over the shapes with masking fluid to protect them from being painted over. I also masked out the flower heads of the purple flowers in front of the pond.

I used a wet and wet technique to lay in the wash for the pond. I knew this was an area that I would have to complete in one step. Painting dark colours and going over them latter can cause the painting to look muddy. This was going to have to be good the first time. Practice on a scrap piece of paper if you are not sure of your technique.

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I added some more colour to the tulips to help them pop out. The focal point should be the area of high contrast.

I needed to work on some trees on the right side of the painting. I made a stencil with mashing tape and then lifted the trunks with a wet brush to get a light area for the trunks.

I needed now to bring up the bushes to a higher level of detail. I painted in the background shapes of some of the bushes. I also added a figure on a bench to the scene. I wanted the figure near my center of interest.

Lastly I removed the masking fluid and worked on the foreground grasses and plants. I checked to make sure that the area around the focal point was the higher contrast area. I quickly added some tree branches to the background trees. I was careful not to overstate them as I wanted my attention to say with the area of interest that I had identified when I began the painting.